

MEDIA RELEASE

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA CALLS ON INDONESIA FOR IMMEDIATE MORATORIUM ON EXECUTIONS TO STOP THE KILLING OF THE BALI BOMBERS

The Human Rights Council of Australia today called for an immediate moratorium on all executions in Indonesia, and around the world to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Human Rights Council calls on the Australian and other governments that have played a leading role in the promotion of human rights to support an immediate moratorium on executions.

In particular it calls on the Prime Minister, Mr Rudd, to make urgent, high level representations to the President of Indonesia to end all executions there, including of those convicted of the Bali bombing.

Speaking in Sydney, spokesperson for the Human Rights Council of Australia and former Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti said *"Following the World War II, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed the inherent dignity and value of every human life. Human life is not valued when life is taken by judicial decree. On this 60th Anniversary, it is time to end the killing, for an immediate moratorium on all executions. The death penalty is wrong everywhere, all the time. Indonesia and Australia can today make a powerful stand together for life by supporting an immediate moratorium."*

Most countries have now moved to abolish the death penalty in law and practice. The movement for abolition has gathered pace since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948 after the horrors of World War II. Australia helped to lead moves for abolition with its support for the 2nd Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which prohibits the use of the death penalty. Last year a resolution calling for "a moratorium on the death penalty" was passed by a vote of 104 in favour to 54 against, with 29 abstentions. Among the countries with the worst record of executions are China, Iran and the USA. *"The support for the death penalty by both candidates in next week's US presidential election is a matter of the gravest concern and regret. We had hoped for more from them, especially from Senator Obama who has campaigned for hope and change."*

In Indonesia the death penalty is still used for a range of offences and is applied to both nationals and non-nationals. Those convicted of the Bali bombing and Australians convicted of drug smuggling are among those facing execution. *"The Human Rights Council of Australia urges the Indonesian and Australian Governments to act immediately before more people are killed. We welcome the work of Indonesian organisations and individuals working to end the use of the death penalty,"* Mr Sidoti said.

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